

The Great Alaska

Clam Rush

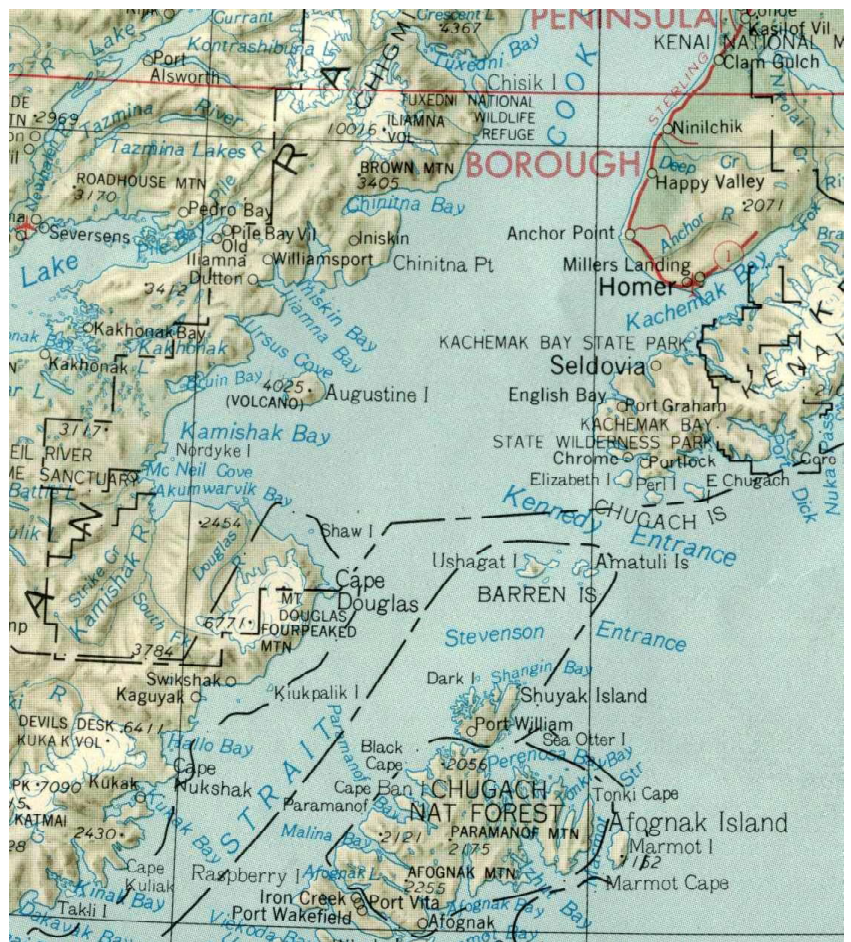
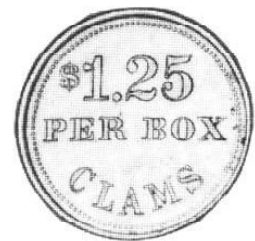
In 1923, Ed Shaw was digging clams in Washington state. In March, his employers (not named) were looking for diggers to go to Alaska. They were going to work the beaches near Snug Harbor.¹

Snug Harbor is on Chisik Island facing the mainland in Tuxedni Bay, almost directly across Cook Inlet from Clam Gulch on the Kenai Peninsula (Find Tuxedni Bay, top center; Chisik Island is just below Tuxedni

Bay; Snug Harbor is where the "A" of National is printed⁶). The clam beds around Snug Harbor were first exploited by the Surf

Packing Company, a partnership between Elmer Hemrich and George Palmer, a trader from Knik (Knik was briefly known as Palmer's Store⁵). The cannery was built in 1919 with a loan from the Bank of Alaska.

When expected profits did not materialize, Palmer (the majority partner) sold out his interests in Surf Packing Company to G.P. Halferty's Pioneer Packing Company, a pioneer in the clam canning industry in Washington and since about 1916, the Cordova area. We cannot say if Pioneer Canneries, Inc. is the same as the Pioneer Packing Company.



(continued on page 58)

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Another year has come to an end. At this time of year, we like to thank our contributors. Without them, this publication would cease to exist. In order of appearance, our thanks go to:

Audrey Parker	Candy Waugaman
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Alan Weinberg	Jaime Smyth
Ron Benice	Jim Robb
Harold Fossum	Kurtis Hawk
David Owenby	Henry Parker.
Mike Locke	

If I have missed anyone, I do apologize.

Also, as the year ends, so do most subscriptions. If your mailing label ends with 04/10, it is time to renew. Please use the enclosed subscription form. Other subscribers whose subscriptions do not expire with this issue will also receive a subscription form, prorated so that your subscription will end with issue #10 of 2005. You may renew now, or we will send you another notice when your subscription expires.

If you choose to not renew your subscription, we would like to thank you for your support, and hope that we may be of service in the future.

Best wishes for a joyous holiday season and a prosperous new year.

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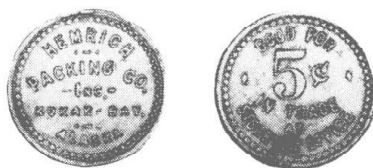
PRICES REALIZED

Selected prices realized from eBay:

Anchorage , Canteen Bar, 12½¢, B-10a	45.44
Bethel , N.C. Co., 50¢, B-2a	OB145.00NB
Cape Edwards , DSS Co., 25¢, B-1c	224.72
Chatanika , Bingle Fritz, 50¢, B-1b	95.00OB
Chatanika , Dempsey Hotel, \$1, B-3c	OB25.00NB
Chena , B&K, 12½¢, B-1a, holed	OB99.00NB
Chichagoff , C. Club, 5¢, B-1a	10.49
Chisana , Anderton, 25¢, B-1a	OB15.00NB
Chisana , Anderton, 50¢, B-1b	15.00OB
Cordova , Harry & Charlie, 5¢, B-14a	75.00OB
Cordova , Rosswog, 6¼¢, B-34a	45.00OB
Dillingham , Bradford, B-1a	OB195.00NB
Haines , Teddy Bear CS, 25¢, unl.	OB40.00NB
Juneau , J Hotel, 5¢ to 50¢, B-37c-f	25.38
Juneau , JD Meyer, B-51a	177.50
(Juneau) , Garnick Encased Cent, HS	28.44
Ketchikan , Katch. Pharm., 5¢, B-22a	50.99
Ketchikan , Lotus Buffet, 6¼¢, B-31c	25.49
Ketchikan , Rainbow Cigar, 12½¢, B-50a	153.63
Kwiguk , Alstrom, set of 6, Rare BU	OB195.00NB
Kwiguk , Alstrom, set of 6, worn	35.00OB
LaTouche , Little, 12½¢, B-2a	169.16
McCarthy , Golden Hotel, 12½¢, B-2a	OB49.50NB
Nenana , Ghezzi, 25¢, B-3aai	22.50
Nome , Belmont, B-7a	15.27
Nome , Columbia, 1 Drink, B-17a	260.00
Nome , NNCo., B-38b	OB75.00NB
Nome , NP Bakery, 5¢, B-39a	OB175.00NB
Nome , NP Bakery, 10¢, B-39b	OB95.00NB
Noorvik , Coop Store, Set of 6	80.00OB
Palmer , ARRC, 5¢, B-1b	33.33
Palmer , ARRC, 10¢, B-1c	36.78
Palmer , ARRC, 25¢, B-1d	44.33
Palmer , Palmer Bar, 50¢, B-4b	OB12.99NB
Palmer , P. Shrimp, 10¢, B-7a	OB9.99
Petersburg , OK's, 5¢, B-7a	OB60.00NB
Port Alexander , Knute Dalsbo, 25¢, B-2b	32.00
Port Alexander , K.D., 25¢, B-2c	25.00OB
Quinhagak , Jean, 50¢, B-1b	30.00OB
Russian River , Henton's, 1 drink, B-1a	16.66
Savoonga , RCC, \$5, B-1g	OB14.95NB
Savoonga , RCC, set of 8	OB90.00NB
Selavik , Rotman, 25¢, B-1a	22.06
Seward , Northern, 12½¢, B-8bi	46.99
Seward , Northern, 12½¢, B-8bii	27.50
Seward , Palace, 12½¢, B-9c	33.55
Seward , Pioneer Club, 12½¢, B-9ai	595.00
Skagway , BoT, 12½¢, B-4d	95.00OB

continued on page 59

CLAM RUSH, CONT.



Hemrich was not ready to give up on clamming in Alaska just yet. In 1923, he incorporated the Hemrich Packing Company, and built a cannery at Kukak Bay. This was some twenty miles south of the clamming beds at Swikshak where the diggers would set up.

Hemrich only operated the cannery for two seasons before leasing it to Seashore Packing Company for the 1925-27 seasons. Hemrich operated the cannery in 1928, and then again leased it to Seashore for the 1929-31 seasons. In 1932, Pioneer Packing leased the cannery. The cannery was closed for the next two seasons.



Sources differ on the 1935 and 1936 seasons. One source says that Surf "Canneries" purchased the cannery in 1935³, while another claims that Hemrich operated it for the 1935 and 1936 seasons⁴. Not in dispute is that fire caused the closure after the 1936 season.



When Ed Shaw came north to Alaska in 1923, he was probably working for the Pioneer Packing Company. The \$1.25 he was paid for a 70 pound box

of clams¹ (another sources says 50 pounds⁴), matches the Pioneer Canneries token.

"Clam diggers used tokens to purchase goods at the company store. The monopoly kept diggers dependent on the company, and inflated prices ensured that by the season's end a clam digger was either in debt or broke. Rarely would employees have any tokens to cash in at the end of the season."⁴

While working on a geological survey crew in 1967, Irvan F. Palmer made an unexpected discovery. Setting up the tents at Swikshak Beach, he found a \$1

token of the Hemrich Packing Company. Before he left, he had also found a 50¢ token and three brass \$10 tokens.²



Hemrich Packing Company is the only issuer that had a complete run of denominated tokens. Issued in values from 5¢ to \$10, these tokens would have been used at a company store as mentioned above

Most of the other companies had tokens with numbers that are unlikely to be of trade value. More likely, they were used as tallies for boxes or pounds of clams.



It is interesting to note that a \$1 token from Hemrich Packing Company is known with an "SPC 30" counterstamp. Presumably, this is for Seashore Packing Company, before they acquired their own tokens. The stamping of "30" on the token seems to indicate a quantity rather than trade value.

SOURCES:

- 1) **The Alaska Sportsman**, "Clams" by Ed Shaw as told to Harry Seaman, November, 1950.
- 2) **The Alaska Sportsman**, "Alaskan Treasure" by Irvan F. Palmer, Jr., March, 1968.
- 3) **Building in an Ashen Land**, Historic Resource Study of the Katmai National Park and Preserve, Janet Clemens and Frank Norris, 1999. On line at <http://www.nps.gov/katm/hrs/hrs.htm>
- 4) **Alaska History**, "Life on the Razor's Edge" by Katherine Johnson; Spring/Fall 2003 (published summer 2004).
- 5) **Alaska Tokens**, Ron Benice, 1994
- 6) **Alaska Map E**, USGS, 1973.

PRICES REALIZED, CONT.

Snug Harbor , Pio. Can., \$1.25 Bx, B-2a	40.00OB
Tonsina , Nafsted, 12½¢, B-1a	76.99
Tonsina , Nafsted, 12½¢, B-1a	44.78
Unga , Baranoff Station, 1 meal, B-1ai	308.03
Valdez , Blackwell (Rowdy), B-2a	OB280.00NB
Valdez , Copper Block, 12½¢ T.C., B-4a	OB69.99NB
Valdez , Copper Block, 12½¢ T.C., B-4a	49.99OB
Whitehorse , TDP, \$10	OB49.95NB
Whitehorse , TDP, \$10	RLOB49.95NB
Whitehorse , TDP, \$10	RLOB49.95NB
AYPE , Encased Cent, round	49.00
AYPE , ½ and 1 DWT	OB570.00NB
AYPE , ½ and 1 DWT	RLOB570.00NB
AK Gold , 1 Pinch	481.76

OB = Opening Bid NB = No Bid RL = relist
 RNM = Reserve Not Met R = Reserve
 BIN = Buy it now

NOVEMBER 13 AUCTION

Lot	Description	PR
226	Cordova B-36a	45.00mb*
227	Fairbanks B-19b	10.00
228	Juneau B-29 a and b	45.00mb*
229	Koyukuk B-3 a,c,d,e,f	100.00mb*
230	Kwiguk B-1f	18.00mb*
231	Noorvik B-1e	22.00
232	Valdez B-4a	22.00
233	1985 AK Railroad medal	45.00mb*
234	1993, 2002 AK medals	80.00
235	1996, 1997 Railroad medals	65.00
236	AK Wildfire medal	22.00
237	AK 1 oz. gold medal, 2000	505.00
238	Athabaskan beaded wallet	35.00
239	Ivory Jewelry	28.00
240	Ivory handled cake cutter	45.00

mb = sold to mail bidder. * = bid reduced. Total bid reductions for the Alaska lots: \$92

OFFICIAL STATE OF ALASKA 2005 MEDALS



Next years state medal, already available, features a deer. We have the proof silver and gold relief available, with the matte finish 1 oz., fractionals and gold medals soon to follow.

Silver Proof, suggested retail - \$39.99; **our price \$35.00**
 Gold Relief, suggested retail - \$64.99; **our price \$60.00**
 Please include \$3 per order for postage and handling.

FOUND IN OUR FILING CABINET

Found in our filing cabinet just in time for Christmas are limited editions of our 1984 25th anniversary of statehood and 1985 Presidential/Papal Visit medal. At the time of minting, we has 100 of each serial numbered. These have languished in our filing cabinet for 19 and 20 years in zip lock bags marked "do not sell." Why you might ask. Well, to sell them to you at issue price, of course! Order soon, only a few of each are available. Please include \$3 per order for postage and handling.

25th Anniversary of Statehood - \$25.00



Presidential/Papal Visit - \$30.00



CHRISTMAS SILVER

Silver rounds and ingots have become a Christmas tradition with many of our local customers. Start your own family tradition this year!



Moose with lights



Snowman with aurora



Cabin



Polar Bear & Penguin



Caribou in wreath



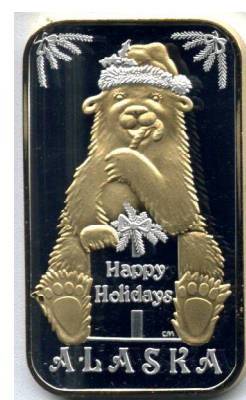
Common reverse



Santa on reindeer



Common reverse



Holiday bear

Silver Proof - Suggested retail, \$34.99; **Our price, \$30.00**

Gold relief - Suggested retail, \$59.99; **Our price - \$55.00**

Include \$3 per order for postage and handling.

Send orders to: Alaska Rare Coins; P.O. Box 72832; Fairbanks, AK 99707

FOR THE RECORD



(ANCHORAGE): Alaska Cab, Ride Value \$5. White on blue plastic, 41mm (submitted by Kurtis Hawk).



FAIRBANKS: Farthest North Moose Lodge 1392, good for one drink. Gold on red plastic, 39mm (submitted by Kurtis Hawk).



ANCHORAGE: F.O.E. Aerie #4207 (Eagles), good for one drink, free cover. Black on blue plastic, 38mm (submitted by Kurtis Hawk).



KETCHIKAN: Moose Lodge 224, good for one drink. Gold aluminum, 35mm (submitted by Kurtis Hawk).



CORDOVA: Moose Lodge No. 11266, When You Get Around Tuit, Ya Gotta Drink Commun. Black on red plastic, 41mm (submitted by Kurtis Hawk).



SITKA: Pioneer Bar, good for one beer. Gold on blue plastic (submitted by Kurtis Hawk).



FAIRBANKS: Ice Dogs, 2001-2002 Season. Black on blue plastic, 32mm (submitted by Kurtis Hawk).



SITKA: Sheldon Jackson College, sun over mountain; reverse- 100 years of Christian Education, 1878-1978., map and open bible. Bronze, 39mm

FOR THE RECORD



SOLDOTNA: Ev & Colleen's Ace of Clubs, One Drink. Black on wood (eBay).



USHUAIA, TIERRA DEL FUEGO: Casino Club, E-1 value. Blue ring, yellow center, printing in white and gold, 35.5mm.



VALDEZ: (Elks) Lodge 2537, good for one drink. Obverse printed in silver, reverse in gold, on white plastic, 41mm (submitted by Kurtis Hawk).

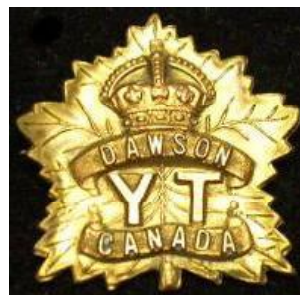


USHUAIA, TIERRA DEL FUEGO: Casino Club, E-9 value. Purple with a white bar through the center, red center, printing in gold and black, 42.4mm.



ALASKA: Alaska Gold Rush Centennial, "The Alaska Collection." Cupronickel, 38mm (submitted by Kurtis Hawk).

While in Ushuaia, I was only able to obtain an E-8 chip. I picked these up on eBay. I looked for my notes to see the values of the chips, but I could not find my notes. I would guess that the E-9 is 10 Pesos. As for the E-1, I don't know.



From the eBay descriptions: "A Canadian Expeditionary Force OFFICER'S cap badge of the Yukon Infantry Company. In gilt on copper, measuring 38mm wide and with original pin and catch on the reverse. Also with maker's plate "MADE IN B.C. Jacoby Bros, Vancouver" on the reverse. This is Babin reference 6-1, Cox 813 and Charleton's reference book page 404." PR - \$316.86



MAVERICK: The Tanana, Good for 5. Brass, presumably 21mm (size not given). There are two other tokens with the title "The Tanana". A 10¢ is shown in the March 1986 issue with the legend curved. A 12½¢ is shown in the January 1998 issue with the legend on a straight line. eBay PR - \$28.00.